



FROM THE DESK OF THE DDSN MEDICAL CONSULTANT

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HEALTH INFORMATION UPDATE

Notes for staff, consumers and members of the SCDDSN Community

As we are moving from the heat of summer to fall, there are several topics that are good to look at.

1) Warm Days/Hurricane Season

Please remember that people can get sick on warm days. Drink plenty of fluids, wear clothing to cover against sun burn. Never leave people in a car in the sun.

As the hurricane season is still present please plan ahead, listen to community messages and follow your agency's policies.

2) West Nile Virus

This year there have been more people getting infected with the West Nile Virus in the U.S. At present this is not a widespread problem in SC. Infection with the virus can cause a flu like illness but can also cause serious brain and nerve problems. There is not yet a vaccine for the virus for humans and it will be difficult to develop one. Therefore, we need to avoid getting the virus. Humans can only get the virus from Mosquito bites. Therefore we need to avoid those pesty bites.

Most SC communities have programs to reduce mosquitos. Mosquitos breed in standing water. To protect ourselves we need to avoid areas around standing water particularly at dusk and dawn. Cover up with long sleeves and pants and use insect repellants (DEET is best proven formula).

3) Influenza

The 2012-2013 season flu vaccines will be available soon. Please get immunized. The flu shot is one of the best things you can do to help yourself and others stay well.

Influenza is a viral illness that affects thousands of people each winter. Many have to go the hospital. At first it may cause fever, cough, aches

and pains and tiredness but it can cause pneumonia and serious problems. Children and people over 60 years of age are most likely to have problems. The flu shot reduces the chance that you will get the illness.

As the viruses that cause flu change all the time you do need a shot each year. The 2012-2013 vaccines are designed to help us fight the viruses that we expect this winter.

A person with flu will cough or sneeze the virus into the air in droplets. Then it can be breathed in or carried into our nose or mouth on our hands if we do not wash hands carefully. To stop the spread we need to reduce coughing, have people who are sick stay home, wash hands often and all get the our shots.

Everyone needs to get the flu vaccine.

4) Swine Influenza

Several people recently get a flu virus from pigs at fairs and farms. It has been a nuisance and made people sick but has not spread from person to person. If you are handling pigs, please wash your hands carefully to avoid this.

As we look forward to cooler days, please protect against heat, plan ahead, avoid mosquito bites and get your flu shot so that we can all enjoy our fall events

Useful Websites

Hurricane Preparations www.aphagetready.org
(lots of info) www.ready.gov
(DDSN Directive) www.ddsn.sc.gov/about/ Directive 150-25 DD

West Nile Virus: www.cdc.gov/features/StopMosquitoes
• www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm
<http://www.scdhec.gov/administration/news/2012/nr20120910-03.htm>

Flu www.cdc.gov/flu/
(for long term care) www.ncoa.org/improve-health/community-education/flu--you